

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

CINC EUR VAHINGEN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13240

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NATO, JA, GW

SUBJECT: GOJ FACT FINDING VISIT

REF: A. BONN 14450; B. TOKYO 10308

SUMMARY: EMBASSY CONVINCED THAT IT IS IN BEST INTERESTS
ALL CONCERNED TO PROVIDE REQUESTED DATA ON LABOR PRACTICES
AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS TO GOJ OFFICIALS WHO ARE
ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE WITH US AUTHORITIES TO MINIMIZE
DIFFICULTIES FOR US FORCES. IN VIEW OF INTENSIVE
OPPOSITION-PARTY INTEREST IN SUCH QUESTIONS, AND INDE-
PENDENT INVESTIGATION BY SOCIALISTS, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE
CONTROL OVER DIET DEBATE OR OTHER PUBLIC AIRING
OF ISSUES, BUT IT BEHOOVES US TO COOPERATE WITH OUR
FRIENDS IN MANAGING PROBLEMS AND TRYING TO ACHIEVE CHANGES
IN PRACTICES THAT WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE
TO US. END SUMMARY.

1. WE FEAR THERE MAY BE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO
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WHAT GOJ TEAM WAS TRYING TO ACHIEVE IN ITS VISITS TO

WASHINGTON AND FRG. THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE AND DISTINCT MAJOR AREAS OF INQUIRY: LABOR PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENT. AS WE ARE SURE IS THE CASE IN EUROPE AS WELL, RAPIDLY RISING LABOR COSTS HAVE IMPOSED AN EVER-INCREASING BURDEN ON SUPPORT BUDGET FOR USFJ COMPONENTS. BETWEEN 1972 AND 1975 US FORCES LOCAL LABOR COSTS DOUBLED DESPITE A DECLINE IN WORK FORCE. PROBLEM IS COMPOUNDED BY FORMULAE USED TO COMPUTE SEPARATION ALLOWANCES FOR THOSE RETIRING OR AFFECTED BY CONTINUED FORCE REDUCTIONS. THERE ARE NUMBER OF AREAS IN WHICH US PRACTICES HAVE BEEN MORE GENEROUS THAN THOSE OF JAPANESE INDUSTRY. GOJ IS SENSITIVE TO US CONCERNS, AND WITHOUT COMMITMENT HAS ENTERED INTO EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS WITH US WITH THOUGHT OF FINDING MEANS TO ALLEVIATE US BURDEN, SHORT OF USING "BURDEN-SHARING" TERMINOLOGY, WHICH REMAINS POLITICAL ANATHEMA. WHILE FORM JAPANESE ASSISTANCE MIGHT TAKE IS NOT YET KNOWN, WHATEVER ARRANGEMENT MIGHT EVENTUALLY EMERGE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO BE DEFENSIBLE IN DIET. ONE AVENUE OF INQUIRY IS ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT IS US PRACTICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE LOCAL EMPLOYEES WITH BETTER THAN CUSTOMARY NATIONAL TREATMENT AND, IF ANSWER IS NEGATIVE, TO SEEK SOME RELIEF FOR US, SPECIFIC MEANS TO BE DEVISED. AS CONCEPT IS ASSOCIATED WITH GERMAN SUPPORT FOR US MILITARY PRESENCE, GOJ HAS NATURALLY BEEN INTERESTED IN EXPLORING OTHER ASPECTS OF "BURDEN-SHARING", RECOGNIZING THAT THIS ROSE WILL HAVE TO BE RENAMED.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IS SECOND AREA IN WHICH USFJ IS WORKING WITH MOFA AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY TO FORESTALL LOCAL PROBLEMS FROM BECOMING NATIONAL ISSUES WHICH MIGHT IN TURN AFFECT OUR MILITARY MISSION. A COMPARISON OF US SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AGAINST THOSE PRESCRIBED BY JAPANESE LAW IS THE HEART OF THE ISSUE. IN SOME AREAS WE KNOW WE GO FURTHER THAN JAPANESE LAW PRESCRIBES WHILE IN OTHER AREAS WE ARE UNSURE. BUT WHATEVER THE TRACK RECORD, ANCILLARY QUESTION HAS BEEN ONE OF ACCESS TO US INSTALLATIONS. THIS IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE QUESTION, AND AGAIN, GOJ INQUIRIES ARE DESIGNED TO HELP US FIND WAYS OF SATISFYING LOCAL SENTIMENT, IN SOME INSTANCES FANNED BY OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, WITHOUT DOING VIOLENCE TO OUR INTERPRE-
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TATIONS OF JAPAN-SOFA--REMEMBER, JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY IS NOT THE SPD.

3. GOJ RECORD IN DEALING WITH SUCH PROBLEMS DISCUSSED ABOVE IS REASSURING. TO BE SURE, WE HAVE DIFFERENCES BUT THE GENERAL GOJ APPROACH IS TO AVOID PUBLIC CONFRONTATION AND INSTEAD TO WORK WITH US IN PRIVATE TO DEVELOP MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS. IN FASHIONING THEIR POSITIONS, THEY HAVE BUREAUCRATIC

THIRST FOR DETAIL, BASED ON LONG EXPERIENCE IN CONTENDING WITH DIET INTERPELLATIONS. WE HAVE FOUND IT ALMOST ALWAYS IN OUR INTEREST TO DO OUR BEST TO SLAKE THIS THIRST, AND GOJ HAS RESPECTED OUR REQUESTS TO TREAT INFORMATION IN CONFIDENCE WHEN REQUIRED.

4. WHILE WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN DISCREET BEHAVIOR OF GOJ, SAME CANNOT BE SAID FOR OPPOSITION. SOCIALISTS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD TEAM IN GERMANY LAST WEEK LOOKING INTO ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS, AND GOJ ANTICIPATES RESULTANT CHARGES TO BE MADE IN DIET THAT NATO SOFA ARRANGEMENTS GIVE GERMAN AUTHORITIES GREATER CONTROL OVER US FORCES IN THIS AREA THAN JAPAN HAS OVER USFJ COMPONENTS. WE STILL BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT BEST APPROACH IS TO PROVIDE GOJ WITH AUTHORITATIVE EXPLANATION OF FRG ARRANGEMENTS AND OF USG INTERPRETATIONS IN WRITING OR ORALLY IF DESIRED. IF THERE ARE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OR SENSITIVITIES, WE SHOULD TRY TO LAY THESE OUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND SOLICIT GOJ COOPERATION TO AVOID COMPLICATING OUR PROBLEMS OR THOSE OF OUR ALLIES.

5. INCIDENTALLY EMBASSY IS SURPRISED AT REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO GOJ OFFICIALS IN PARA 2 B REF A. SATO REPEATEDLY HAS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH TEAM'S RECEPTION AND WE UNDERSTAND HE HAS WRITTEN A LETTER SINGLING OUT FOR THANKS USAREUR FOR ITS COOPERATION.

6. USFJ CONCURS.
SHOESMITH

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